

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD  
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

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Property Address:	<b>7112 Chestnut Street, NW</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Takoma Park Historic District</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>July 25, 2013</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>13-471</b>	<b>X</b>	New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Anne Brockett</b>		Alteration

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The subject property is a vacant lot on which owner Brien Pollard seeks the Board's concept review for new construction of a single-family home. The mid-block lot, which faces Chestnut Street but is also visible from the rear along Piney Branch Road, was formerly occupied by an 1880s house destroyed by fire nearly 15 years ago.

### **Site Description**

Chestnut is a block-long, dead-end street occupied by homes dating primarily from the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These display a variety of forms, rooflines, and details – not only among one another, but on each individual house. The larger houses take their cues from the late Queen Anne aesthetic with front or side gable roofs, canted bays, patterned shingles, and wraparound porches. While the more recent, smaller homes reflect the American foursquare in their box-like forms, hipped roofs, and simple detailing. What is consistent throughout is that the larger houses are highly articulated and the foursquares, are less exuberant 3-bay square boxes. Worth noting is that the lot for 7112 is shallower than others on the block, the result of a subdivision that sectioned off its rear yard to accompany a 1970s house on Piney Branch. The modern two-car garage directly to the north of 7112 accompanies this non-historic house.

### **Project Description**

The proposed house is a simple two-story, five-bay rectangular block under a hipped roof with front and rear dormers. A front porch extends the full width of the façade and an open deck sits at the rear. A driveway, utilizing the existing curb cut, will run along the southern property line. Siding is proposed as clapboard on the first floor, with shingles above. Windows, which are paired in some instances, are one-over-one sashes with wide board trim.

### **Evaluation**

The owner has intentionally set back the building from the street to match the setbacks of the adjacent historic homes and form a continuous row. However, when combined with the shallow depth of the lot and the required 25' rear yard setback, and the desire to maximize square footage, the result is a 45-foot long unarticulated composition that extends the full width of the buildable area.

For comparison, original building permits for the houses on the west side of the street show the widths (not including porches) 24' (two houses), 25' (three houses), and 37' (corner house). On the east side, four permits show house widths of 24, 25, 27, and 30 feet.

While the overall size of the proposed house is not unusual in this neighborhood, the existing homes are broken down into blocks of different sizes in differing planes. Often the original houses have been added onto, which contributes to this variety of roof forms and massing on each house. To better reflect the evolution of building traditions and patterns in Takoma Park, some articulation is needed here to relieve the long plane of the façade.

One suggestion, although there are certainly alternate approaches, would be to break up the façade into a traditional 3-bay foursquare with hip roof, dormers, and a front porch and a side ell with hip or gable roof, set back several feet from the facade. The porch would be limited to foursquare portion, which would help deemphasize the horizontality. To accommodate some modulation of the façade, it may be appropriate for a part of the house to be moved forward on the lot.

The overall concept is moving in the right direction and as the plans develop, the HPO will ensure a close emulation of period details for the porch, columns, window casing, dormer proportions, doors, and windows.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board find the proposed concept compatible with the character of the historic district and consistent with the purposes of the preservation act, and delegate final approval to staff.*